

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAIGON 02948 160217Z

73

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00

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TAGS: MOPS, PINT, VN, VS

SUBJECT: DEATH OF AFP CORRESPONDENT PAUL LEANDRI

FOLLOWING IS PRESS RELEASE ISSUED BY GVN SPOKESMAN MORNING OF
MARCH 15:

BEGIN TEXT:

COMPETENT SOURCES AT THE NATIONAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS REVEAL:

(1) ON THURSDAY, 13 MARCH 1975, AGENCE FRANCE PRESS AT SAIGON
SENT A BULLETIN SAYING THAT, ACCORDING TO A PRIEST, THE ATTACK ON
BAN ME THUOT WAS A REVOLT OF THE FULRO GROUP AND OF LOCAL VIET
CONG AND NOT AN ATTACK BY THE NORTH VIETNAMESE.

(2) THEREFORE, AT 1115 FRIDAY, 14 MARCH 1975, THE NATIONAL
POLICE HEADQUARTERS SELECTED A FIELD GRADE OFFICER OF THE
JUDICIAL POLICE TO GO TO THE OFFICE OF AFP LOCATED AT 158-D
PASTEUR, SECOND FLOOR, SAIGON 2, TO FIND OUT FURTHER DETAILS
CONCERNING THE ABOVE BULLETIN. THERE THAT OFFICER MET PAUL
LEANDRI. PAUL LEANDRI IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS THE DEPUTY CHIEF
OF THE AFP OFFICE AND ALSO AS THE WRITER OF THIS BULLETIN.

(3) THEREFORE, AT 1530 THE SAME DAY THE IMMIGRATION OFFICE
OF THE NATIONAL POLICE SENT AN INVITATION TO PAUL LEANDRI TO COME
TO THAT OFFICE FOR THE PURPOSE OF INQUIRING ABOUT FURTHER DETAILS
CONCERNING THE BULLETIN WHICH PAUL LEANDRI WROTE.

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 SAIGON 02948 160217Z

AT 1815 THE SAME AFTERNOON PAUL LEANDRI CAME TO

THE IMMIGRATION OFFICE IN A PRIVATE AUTOMOBILE DRIVEN BY A CHAUFFEUR FROM AFP.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE FRENCH CONSUL GENERAL IN SAIGON WAS INFORMED THAT THE CORRESPONDENT PAUL LEANDRI HAD BEEN INVITED TO COME TO THE IMMIGRATION OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL POLICE.

(4) AT THE IMMIGRATION OFFICE PAUL LEANDRI REFUSED TO DISCUSS THE MATTER, AND ADOPTED A BELLIGERENT, OFFENSIVE MANNER. HE INSULTED THE CHIEF OF THE IMMIGRATION OFFICE, DESTROYED SOME FURNITURE AND OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND USED UNPRINTABLE LANGUAGE. THEREUPON THE CHIEF OF THE IMMIGRATION OFFICE ASKED PAUL LEANDRI TO ACCOMPANY HIM TO THE JUDICIAL SECTION OF THE NATIONAL POLICE FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING WHETHER CHARGES SHOULD BE FILED AGAINST HIM.

PAUL LEANDRI THEN PROCEEDED BY PRIVATE AUTOMOBILE, DRIVEN BY AN AFP CHAUFFEUR, TO THE JUDICIAL SECTION, WITHIN THE NATIONAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS COMPOUND.

(5) ARRIVING IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING HOUSING THE JUDICIAL SECTION, PAUL LEANDRI GOT OUT OF THE CAR BUT DID NOT ENTER THE OFFICE AND WALKED AROUND THE COURTYARD. THEN, SEEING THE CHIEF OF THE IMMIGRATION OFFICE WHO HAD ALSO ARRIVED ON THE SCENE, HE AGAIN STARTED TO CURSE THAT OFFICIAL AND BECAME EXTREMELY INSULTING.

AFTER THAT, SUDDENLY, PAUL LEANDRI JUMPED INTO HIS AUTOMOBILE, USING HIS OWN KEY, STARTED THE ENGINE AND DROVE QUICKLY IN THE DIRECTION OF THE GATE OF THE NATIONAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS, LEAVING BEHIND THE DRIVER IN WHOSE HANDS STILL REMAINED THE KEYS TO THE VEHICLE.

IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER, THE DUTY OFFICER OF THE JUDICIAL SECTION ATTEMPTED TO STOP THE AUTOMOBILE BUT COULD NOT BECAUSE PAUL LEANDRI WAS DETERMINED TO FLEE IN THE AUTOMOBILE. THE DUTY OFFICER FIRED IN THE AIR IN ORDER TO WARN PAUL LEANDRI TO STOP, BUT HE CONTINUED HIS DISOBEDIENCE.

(6) HEARING THE SOUND OF THE SHOT AND SEEING A VEHICLE FLEEING FROM THE JUDICIAL SECTION IN THE DIRECTION OF THE GATE OF THE NATIONAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS, A POLICEMAN AT THE FIRST GUARDPOST EXTENDED HIS ARMS SIGNALLING THE VEHICLE TO STOP. BUT PAUL LEANDRI CONTINUED DRIVING THE VEHICLE DIRECTLY TOWARD THE POLICE OF THE GUARDPOST, REQUIRING THESE PERSONNEL TO JUMP TO ONE SIDE.

THE POLICEMAN AT A SECOND GUARDPOST FIRED INTO THE AIR
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 SAIGON 02948 160217Z

AT THE SAME TIME SHOUTING "STOP." BUT STILL WITHOUT EFFECT. ARRIVING AT THE MAIN GATE, THE PATROLMAN AT THIS GATE ALSO SHOUTED "STOP OR I'LL SHOOT." PAUL LEANDRI STILL CONTINUED DRIVING THE VEHICLE AT HIGH SPEED OUT OF THE GATE OF THE NATIONAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS, CAUSING THE PATROLMAN TO FIRE THREE TIMES AT THE TIRES OF THE VEHICLE TO STOP IT. ONE OF THE SHOTS KILLED PAUL LEANDRI.

(7) IMMEDIATELY AFTER THIS OCCURRENCE, THE FRENCH

CONSUL GENERAL AT SAIGON WAS INFORMED AND PERSONALLY ARRIVED ON
THE SPOT, WHILE THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE DOCTOR WERE CARRYING
OUT THE LEGAL FORMALITIES.
SAIGON, 14 MARCH 1975 END TEXT
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